Retaking the Lead from Behind: A New Role for America in Libya

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Abstract

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The Arab Awaking upended thirty years of U.S. regional engagement in North Africa and heightened America's strategic interests in Libya. While militias dominate and destabilize the security environment in Libya, the country's oil wealth, infrastructure, and largely ethnically homogenous, pro-Western population show promise for long term stability and prosperity. To transition Libyan security structures into guardians of institutionalized democracy, Libya must overcome the legacy of a regime which robbed it of human capital. The United States Government, and in particular the Department of Defense (DoD), has employed many tools to assist Libya with this transition, but to date these have proved inadequate. Through a principled, low-cost approach, DoD can broaden steps to non-invasively support Libya's burgeoning democracy, employing tools such as defense advisors, security cooperation specialists, and Special Forces trainers. DoD can also enable the capabilities of international partners and allies, especially NATO. The payoffs are extreme; success could lead Libya to becoming a longstanding U.S. regional security partner, while failure could result in continued chaos and an extremist safe haven.

Retaking the Lead from Behind: A New Role for America in Libya

Well, Doctor, what have we got—a Republic or a Monarchy?

A Republic, if you can keep it.

Benjamin Franklin

America's military intervention in support of the 2011 Libyan uprising against the regime of Muamar Qadhafi drew strong criticism from those who thought the U.S. government's policy of "leadership from behind" had led to stalemate. In truth, the United States provided just enough, just in time support to the anti-Qadhafi rebels through crucial high-technological and logistical enablers. This nuanced level of assistance allowed the Libyans to cast off oppression and respected their fervent desire to avoid any form of foreign military occupation. Ironically, the U.S. government's tepid assistance to the newly elected Libyan government draws little criticism while it lags far behind in providing leadership which could help secure the country and formalize its institutions. As current events are forcing the United States to re-assess its security strategy for North Africa, and particularly Libya, this paper highlights specific ways in which to manifest American leadership.

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Operation ODYSSEY DAWN commenced on March 19, 2011, and with it the United States' first concrete act of engagement in the Arab Awakening. The operation, marking United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM)'s combat debut, segued into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR at the beginning of April, in which the United States played a critical role. U.S.

reconnaissance, intelligence, refueling, rearming, electronic warfare, and remotely-piloted aircraft undergirded NATO and ensured the Libyan rebels' eventual triumph over the regime of Muamar Qadhafi. Libyans were exuberant, proud of their victory and many confident that they could create a free and democratic country. However, during the spring of 2012, the flush of victory began to fade and Libyans' confidence faltered when they realized how much they yet needed to accomplish to create a new government. Armed revolt had been the easy part, maintaining unity and purpose afterward was hard. Officials in the National Transitional Council (NTC), lacking a democratic mandate, refrained from making key decisions and from entering into foreign agreements, preferring to leave those issues until after the election of a new government.[1]

The United States backed away from the prominent role it had played during the fighting, and largely allowed the United Nations to organize international support for Libya. As a result, local councils, militias, criminal and terrorist organizations, and other groups filled the power vacuum while international assistance remained limited. To their credit, the NTC and UN did direct appropriate energy to the conduct of national elections, which were largely successful. But when elections were complete, because Libya lacked a constitution, newly elected officials took over undefined roles. At the same time, international support frequently defaulted to a bilateral basis and many initiatives failed. The new government took steps to assert authority over some weakly controlled areas, but these attempts were met by violent resistance, including targeted assassinations of security officials and foreign officials supportive of the Libyan

government. Deteriorating security eventually resulted in the tragic death of U.S. ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans in Benghazi.

Libya's Increased Strategic Importance

Libya has long held an important place with regard to U.S. strategic interests, disproportionate to the country's small population. Before the 2011 Revolution, top U.S.-Libyan priorities included counter-terrorism activities, energy production, countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation (to include dismantling and destruction of Libya's WMD stocks and precursor materials), business ventures other than oil and gas, and working to ensure Libya otherwise contributed to stability in the North Africa region.

During the 2011 Libyan Revolution, Libya took on increased significance to U.S. strategic interests. The U.S. intervention prevented the massacre of civilians and demonstrated commitment to the U.N.'s *responsibility to protect* initiative, allowing the United States to influence the events of the Arab Spring directly. Up to that point, the U.S. had largely been a spectator, or at best operating behind the scenes, as seen in the case of the ouster of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. U.S. action in 2011 also reinforced the importance of the NATO alliance in global affairs by allowing it to demonstrate a continued key role in global security affairs.

The ouster of Muamar Qadhafi served to heighten U.S. security interests in Libya. After the fall of the Qadhafi regime, the United States grew increasingly concerned about the ability of Libya's weak transitional government to police the state. Added to pre-existing interests was a need to control the outflow of Libyan arms across

the region, in particular thousands of shoulder-fired, man-portable air defense missiles (MANPADS), such as the Russian manufactured SA-7 (also known as 9K32 Strela-2). Libyan authorities repeatedly scoffed at the danger these weapons presented, they stated that the arms had not been properly stored or serviced in decades; therefore the weapons were incapable of threatening aircraft. U.S. officials countered that although the threat appeared low; they saw the large number of uncontrolled MANPADS falling into the hands of terrorists. The consequence of terrorists downing just one civilian airliner with such a weapon would be catastrophic to Libya's economy. There was additional worry that these weapons could find their way out of the country, affecting security in Mali, Egypt, Israel, and elsewhere.[2] The United States was also highly alarmed after the transitional government discovered previously unreported stocks of weaponized mustard gas, hidden by the Qadhafi regime in Libya's southern desert.[3] Finally, the United States came to recognize that Islamic extremist organizations, including al-Qaeda affiliates, were infiltrating into Libya with a view to acquire arms, recruits, and exploit the chaos there. In addition to attacking Western diplomats and non-governmental organizations, violent extremists began a campaign in eastern Libya targeting security officials and staging attacks into neighboring Algeria.[4] The rising power of militant Islamists across the country has increased the need for U.S. assistance to help defeat them. For without U.S. support to Libya's government, these groups remain unchecked, possibly expanding extremist activities beyond Libya's borders.

Most crucially, the United States has a newfound interest in ensuring the success of Libya's democratic experiment and preventing a relapse into despotism. The cost of

failure is worrisome; faltering petroleum exports and a safe haven for violent extremists, smugglers, and human traffickers tucked next to Europe's underbelly. Libya's vast territory, directly bordering six African countries, could allow jihadists to destabilize the region. In such case, the United States might also face international criticism for having helped bring about Libyan instability by unseating Qadhafi.

To reverse Libya's descent into chaos, the United States should reach out to Tripoli. Should the United States adequately assist Libyans in righting their ship of state, there are indicators Libya could prove to be a centerpiece-security partner in North Africa. A mid-2012 Gallup poll indicated a level of Libyan goodwill toward the United States which rated among the highest ever recorded, contrasted with general disapproval of Russia and China. The polling also pointed towards broad Libyan willingness to accept Western military trainers, military equipment, governance experts, and economic aid. This high level of popular backing for Western engagement is nearly unprecedented among Arab countries.[5] In addition to pro-Western sentiment, Libyans elected a secular coalition to lead their new national assembly, a notable break from the trend of rising Islamist political power across North Africa.[6] In all of the Arab Awakening, Libya alone offers the opportunity to develop into a U.S. ally and secular Arab democracy.

The combined dangers and opportunities in Libya are powerful incentives for America to direct more attention and resources towards it. This is all the more important as the Cold War paradigm of supporting dictatorships friendly to U.S. interests no longer applies in much of North Africa. If the United States desires to remain relevant in the region, now is the time to adjust policy to match the realities on the ground.

Libya Today

Despite their good intentions, Libyans cannot make the best of their revolution. Qadhafi robbed the country of human capital and converted security structures to instruments which served solely to preserve his regime. The destruction of the regime likewise destroyed the effectiveness of Libyan security organizations, leaving little foundation on which to build a trusted police force and army. Today, responsibility for security functions has largely fallen into the hands of local militias, whose loyalties primarily rest with their respective local communities. When a militia declares allegiance to the national government, its loyalty remains locally based. No steps are taken to integrate it into a nationally supported and controlled framework. Although government payments are made to militia leaders and members, the Chief of Staff of the Libyan military appears incapable of taking further steps to ensure the integration of the militias into a Libyan national force, separated from their local interests.[7] As a result, the ultimate loyalty toward the state of revolutionaries including those who declared themselves members of the Libyan National Army appears questionable. Despite frequent public outcry and demands for their demobilization, Libya lacks an alternative to the entrenched power of local militias.

Libyan society acquiesces to the diffusion of power at the local level, for in most circumstances, the militias provide security and jobs within local communities. A majority of the militias are accountable to local civil councils. Social pressure keeps militiamen from acting irresponsibly within their own communities. Militia leaders are unlikely to act in ways counter to the interests of the local councils that support them, just as young Libyan men are less likely to misbehave when their actions are observed

by neighbors who are often members of their extended family. It is only when militias depart their local social networks that significant problems develop. Militia leaders, seeking alternate forms of upkeep, become open to extortion, smuggling, and other illicit moneymaking arrangements. In these circumstances, militias are less likely to discipline any misbehavior in their ranks. Militia members are also able to drink, use drugs, and conduct other activities without having to worry about social repercussions. Although aware of the problems brought about by rogue militias, local communities still distrust the new government. This fear leads to citizens resist disbandment of their local militia even in those limited circumstances when central government security authorities are available.[8]

Since the fall of the Qadhafi regime in October 2011, episodic militia clashes have occurred in nearly every major urban area and many rural parts of Libya, some of which have lasted days and weeks. Fortunately, in every circumstance, the fighting remained localized and did not threaten to extend across any particular region of Libya. However, as long as the Libyan government remains impotent, militias will develop and aggregate their own power structures. The longer the central government fails to establish authority over the militias, the potential for broader regional clashes increases.

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As grimly evidenced by the September 11, 2012 attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya's government and security institutions are weak. Even prior to the 2011 revolution, Libya's armed forces were in disarray. After years of neglect by the Qadhafi regime, Libya's once powerful military had become a hollow force. Since the mid-80s, Qadhafi refused to pay competitive wages and ceased training junior officers other than

for his personal protective brigades. Those soldiers that remained in the military would typically only spend a few hours a day on duty, and then depart to work at other jobs. Officers could scarcely afford to own a single uniform, and it was commonplace to see men on duty in civilian attire, maintaining one dress uniform for ceremonial occasions. Large scale ground force maneuver training was almost unknown. The Libyan Navy rarely put to sea. The shortage of resources and poor standards led to increased accidents. From 2008-2011, the Libyan Air Force experienced multiple aircraft crashes, several involving fatalities.

By the mid-2000s, most Libyans considered a military career to be a job option of last resort. Morale within the ranks was extremely low. The Qadhafi regime had at one time outlawed English and French language instruction, resulting in a "lost generation" of Libyans, who lacked adequate language skills to attend training courses in the West. With no junior officer recruitment or development, the Libyan officer corps became grossly top-heavy, with far too few officers below the rank of Colonel. Officers lacked training and experience, particularly in strategic decision making. The backbone of Libya's officer corps today is a group of retirement-aged men who are distrusted by the young revolutionaries and who have limited means to build a military capable of meeting Libya's security needs.

Qadhafi's neglect, the NATO bombing campaign, and power-grabs by militias have left the Libyan government with a paucity of resources on which to base its armed forces. There are insufficient barracks to quarter new recruits and little modern equipment to arm them. The navy's few vessels available are without modern navigational and communications gear.[9] Through cannibalization, and some measure of

mechanical ingenuity, the Air Force has managed to keep a few aircraft flying, but the result is a very small, eclectic mix of barely serviceable airframes. Libya's Air Defense Force (a separate branch of the armed forces) suffered twofold ignominy; neglected by Qadhafi, and pummeled by NATO, it has no credible means to guard Libyan airspace. Facing these dire prospects, at best it will take a decade or more to rebuild the Libyan armed forces. [10]

The United States' Contribution to Date

Prior to the Libyan revolution, the U.S. military long recognized the need to bring a level of professionalism to the Libyan military. To this end, the U.S. Department of Defense involved itself in developing programs to introduce the Libyan military to Western standards, with particular attention paid towards Libya's intended contribution to African Union peacekeeping forces. From 2008 to early 2011, USAFRICOM sponsored military-to-military programs, the most notable of which was the visit by the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Boutwell* in mid-2009. By Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, the United States had established a small International Military Education and Training (IMET) Budget, just over $300,000, as a well a token Foreign Military Funding (FMF) account of $150,000 to assist the Libyan Armed Forces.[11]

USAFRICOM proposed several programs for 2010, but the Qadhafi regime largely rebuffed them due to rising diplomatic tensions with the United States. Progress slowed after the return to Libya of the Lockerbie bomber, Abd al-Baset al-Maghrahi, in August of 2009, as well as due to regime displeasure over Wikileaks documents which discussed Muamar Qadhafi's quirky personality. An engagement breakthrough

appeared possible in February of 2011 when Muamar's son and prominent commander of Libya's premier combat brigade, Captain Khamis al-Qadhafi, travelled to the United States as a part of a graduate school internship sponsored by U.S. company, AECOM. During this trip, Khamis visited the United States Air Force Academy and National Defense University, but he abruptly cancelled a planned visit to West Point and returned to Libya when demonstrations erupted across eastern Libya.[12]

Since the conclusion of NATO combat operations in Libya, Washington has dedicated limited resources towards the establishment of a new Libyan military. The primary tools the United States has employed to support the Libyan military are IMET, $25 million Presidential Drawdown, USAFRICOM engagement, Excess Defense Articles (EDA), FMF, Foreign Military Sales (FMS), and the Defense Institute Reform Initiative (DIRI) programs. The success of each program has been mixed. Other countries, such as Great Britain, France, Italy, Turkey, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates have also made small contributions. Taken in aggregate, international support has yet to counter the deteriorating security situation. The United States has not done enough to address its strategic interests in proportion with the importance of Libya.

The first IMET expenditure went towards the purchase of two English language Computer learning centers, actually designated for installation in Tripoli and Benghazi during the FY 2010 budget cycle. Fortunately, with the exception of books and software, those learning centers had not been shipped prior to the Revolution, thus remaining available in its aftermath. A U.S. team completed installation of the first ten-position English Language Computer Learning Center in early December 2012. Security considerations prevented the team from installing the second center in Benghazi.

10

Instead, the team delivered equipment and classroom materials to the Libyan military along with training so Libyans themselves could install the second computer lab.[13]

IMET funding was cancelled in FY 2011 due to the Revolution. A large portion of U.S. FY 2012 IMET funding went towards sending a Libyan Air Force Lt. Colonel to the Air Command and Staff College, notably the first Libyan officer to receive Professional Military Education (PME) in the United States in over 40 years. Funding was allotted to train three Libyan officers at the Defense Language Institute in San Antonio, Texas as English language instructors – the intent being for them to return to Libya and teach in aforementioned language centers. Also in 2012, the USAFRICOM Commander authorized the use of his Emerging Initiative funds to send a Libyan Navy Captain to the U.S. Naval Command College. The United States extended an offer to send a Libyan Army officer to the U.S. Army War College; however the Libyans were unable to produce a candidate with adequate English skills.

This lack of proficient Libyan English speakers resulted in additional unused funding. The United States intended to send a steady stream of Libyan officers to attend courses such as the Defense Institute for Security Assistance Management (DISAM), which would familiarize them with the U.S. training administration and military equipment sales. However, demonstrating the magnitude of the language training challenge, as of September 2012, out of 42 Libyan officers tested, only six met the English level required to attend U.S. courses such as the War College, Command and Staff College, and DISAM.[14]

Despite Libya's pressing needs, IMET funding cuts have jeopardized future training programs. Although Washington discussed the increase of funds, the State

Department designated only $50,000 for Libyan IMET and $150,000 for FMF in FY 2013.[15] U.S. officials rationalized this cut through an expectation that Libya's oil economy should permit it to fund its own officer attendance at U.S. schools; however the Libyan government does not appear bureaucratically prepared to pay. Without an increase in current funding levels, it will not be possible to finance Libyan attendance at any yearlong PME, such as a staff college.

During and after the Revolution, AFRICOM facilitated the provision of non-lethal military equipment, mainly uniforms, body armor, chemical protective gear, and medical supplies, through the President's drawdown authorization of $25 million worth of U.S. government commodities and services.[16] By the end of 2012, most of these funds were exhausted, and there was no plan to authorize further drawdown allocations.

After the visit by U.S. Secretary of Defense Panetta to Libya in December 2011, AFRICOM redirected its resources to support new opportunities there. In early April 2012 AFRICOM sent an officer to open up the Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) within U.S. Embassy, Tripoli. During the summer of 2012, a non-commissioned officer joined the team as well. Since opening, the office has coordinated stateside training opportunities and travelled with Libyan delegations to the United States and elsewhere for the purpose of inspecting and potentially acquiring Excess Defense Articles, such as CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters and High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV). Other OSC duties included accompanying Libyan senior officers who attended USAFRICOM's 2012 Africa Land Forces Summit in Angola. The office has also been involved in attempting to resolve the longstanding impasse over eight derelict Libyan C-130s which remain in Marietta, Georgia, a legacy of sanctions imposed by the

U.S. government in the 1970s. Finally, the OSC has encouraged the Libyan government to consider ways to spend its FMF allocations and acquire equipment through the U.S. FMS system.

One of the U.S. programs which might address an area of greatest Libyan military need is the Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI). DIRI is designed to help partner countries develop accountable, professional, and transparent defense establishments. DIRI is implemented through periodic visits by U.S. military experts to the partner country. DIRI focus areas, all of which are critical Libyan needs, are:

- Defense Policy & Strategy

- Human Resource Management

- Defense Planning, Budgeting and Resource Management

- Logistics & Infrastructure

- Civil-Military Relations and Interagency Coordination

- Professional Defense & Military Education[17]

As of September 2012, the DIRI program was in its first phase (requirements determination) and moving into its second phase for program development. Unfortunately, the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi resulted in the cancellation and postponement of planned DIRI activities. Once the program is able to recommence, it still may not adequately address Libya's needs. In November 2012, the DoD Inspector General assessed DIRI as being too intermittent and lacking a defined mission.[18] As it is still early in the process, it remains to be seen whether the sporadic engagement methods of the DIRI program will be suitable to meet the needs of Libya's defense

establishment. If not, it might be more appropriate to develop a Ministry of Defense

Advisory team to work full time in Libya.[19]

What More Can Be Done, And How?

The deteriorating security conditions in Libya should make it clear that the steps

taken by the United States and its international partners have not been enough. Rather

than writing off the Libyan Revolution as a failure, the United States can bring about

significant improvements. It could modestly increase resources and leverage allied

capabilities. By so doing, America can demonstrate its commitment to Libyan

democracy, help stabilize the country, and lay the foundation for a long term security

partnership.

<u>*Principles*</u>

To achieve greatest effect, American policy makers should remember that, while

grateful to the West, Libyans are extremely proud of their revolution. By remaining

mindful of this and other cultural factors, the United States can maintain the support of

the broader Libyan populace. As the United States considers ways to improve

assistance, the following principles should be kept in mind:

1. **No basing**. Due largely in part to their experience with Italian colonialism,

Libyans are hypersensitive towards any foreign military establishing itself in their midst.

Western powers must avoid any action that has the appearance of foreign military

forces creating a permanent presence in Libya.

2. **It has to look and feel like a partnership**. In their most honest and reflective

moments, Libyan leaders will confess of their country's shortcomings, but their pride

remains sensitive. Libyan leaders cannot permit any appearance of a foreign country imposing its will upon Libya. Therefore, all foreign activities must appear as true joint ventures. If the Libyan leadership cannot sell an activity to their public as a 50-50 proposition, they lose face, and the foreign supporter loses influence.

  3. **Transparency.** Libyans are notoriously prone to conspiracy theory. Partnership activities must be publicly known, or at least knowable, otherwise they will feed internal rumor mills. While there must be due consideration for Western personnel force protection, an effective strategic messaging campaign will be vital to success.

  4. **Balance.** The United States cannot just have a military-security engagement strategy, it needs a balanced approach. The U.S. plan must be more heavily weighted towards civilian education and cultural programs.[20]

Actions

Despite budget restrictions, there is much the United States, and the Defense Department in particular, can do to help move Libya towards a secure and stable future. First, the United States should play a stronger global leadership role and exercise its convening powers to organize international support, with special attention towards NATO and Arab partners. Next, the United States should also reinforce existing measures such as embassy OSC staffing to inform and coordinate security cooperation efforts more effectively. Further, the United States should create a Ministry of Defense advisory capacity that, through a culturally approach, effectively influences Libyan leaders. Finally, the United States should employ Special Operations Forces trainers and other capabilities to create a core security capacity for the Libyan central government quickly.

Leverage NATO

To begin with, U.S. efforts should focus where it left off at the end of the Revolution, with NATO. After the fall of the Qadhafi regime, NATO exited the stage, leaving the reformation of Libyan security structures to others. Unrepresented, the organization with perhaps the greatest capacity to provide Libya with what it needed played almost no role. The Libyan government has seemingly ignored NATO overtures, such as an offer to conduct joint exercises. NATO officials invited the Libyan Military Chief of Staff, Major General Yusif Mangush to a conference in Italy, but he declined to attend. In these circumstances, a lack of Tripoli-based representation has hindered NATO, forcing it to conduct liaison with the Libyan government through its embassy in Brussels.

Libya is not alone in having ignored NATO, alliance members and the UN have failed to incorporate the organization in post-revolution affairs. Notably, NATO representatives were not invited to participate in the Paris International Ministerial Conference on Support to Libya in the Areas of Security, Justice and Rule of Law on 12 February 2013, despite that conference's focus on Libyan security matters. NATO efforts to work with the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) have been equally unsuccessful. UNSMIL's staff has done little to consider how they might leverage NATO capabilities. Instead, UNSMIL tends to allow bilateral efforts to proceed, over which they have little oversight or influence.[21]

It is important to recognize that in addition to broadening the participation of allied countries in the reformation of Libyan defense structures, NATO also provides a means to leverage capabilities that the United States does not have on its own. Most significant

among these are the gendarmerie forces of many member countries. The Libyan government will likely need to develop a similar paramilitary capability for the protection of oil and water infrastructure, border security, and as a hedge against tribal and ethnic unrest. Lacking a comparable force, Libya cannot receive American advise on doctrine, organization, and best practices. And facing economic crises, partner countries such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal, although willing, may be hard pressed to commit the resources needed to help create a comparable Libyan force. The only effective way forward may be through the use of NATO structures and funding. NATO has several venues through which it could assist Libya, the first of which already offered. At the conclusion of the North Atlantic Council's Chicago Summit, in May 2012, the participating Heads of State and Government issued a declaration which formally invited Libya to partner with NATO by joining the organization's Mediterranean Dialogue (MD).[22] The Mediterranean Dialogue (like the Partnership for Peace program) provides a venue in areas where NATO can add value, primarily security and defense sector reform, a critical Libyan need. Membership would also allow NATO to offer Libyan officers the opportunity to attend counter-terrorism, military law, joint operations, non-commissioned officer and other courses at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany.[23]

An additional benefit of Mediterranean Dialogue membership is that it would allow NATO to establish a trust fund. The scope of the Trust Fund policy is twofold: (1)to assist partner nations to destroy their anti-personnel land mines stockpiles, surplus munitions, unexploded ordnance, small arms and light weapons; and (2) to assist partner nation's defense reform management. This may include, but is not limited to,

projects promoting civil and democratic reform of the armed forces, retraining of military personnel, base conversion, and promoting effective defense planning and budgeting under democratic control.[24] Over the long term, it can be expected that Libya's oil wealth will allow it to fund similar projects on its own; in fact Libyans may insist on it. However, given that Libya faces so many pressing needs, and its Qadhafi-legacy bureaucratic structures are slow and inefficient, a NATO Trust Fund would be the most efficacious means of quick-starting the defense reform process. This would also be a means by which smaller NATO member countries, perhaps lacking representation in Libya, could contribute to the country's recovery.

To date, Libya has not responded to NATO's offer to join the Mediterranean Dialogue, although this could likely be a product of internal political turmoil and NATO's lack of representation in Libya. The United States should press Libya diplomatically on NATO's behalf to take advantage of the offer to join the Mediterranean Dialogue. At the same time, the United States could organize discussion and planning on other ways NATO could best direct resources towards assisting Libya, in conjunction with the ongoing parallel efforts of UNSMIL.

Although MD membership would undoubtedly be of value to advance Libyan security reform, it may not be the best fit. One of the requirements of MD events is that they must be offered to all participants. The needs of Libya may not match the needs of the seven existing members. Libyan enthusiasm for the program could also be hindered by Israel's membership in it. Libyan leaders could be unwilling to risk potential domestic political blowback by entering into such a relationship. To avoid these pitfalls, either as a

compliment or alternative to Mediterranean Dialogue membership, NATO could develop

an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program (IPCP) for Libya.

An IPCP would hold more latitude to meet specific needs than a forum such as

the Mediterranean Dialogue. In September 2012, NATO established a similar program

in Iraq which is to develop the capacity of Iraqi security institutions and to cultivate the

expertise of their national defense academies. The Iraq IPCP also provides a framework

for political dialogue and for training and cooperation in areas such as counter-terrorism,

crisis management and critical energy infrastructure protection.[25] Notably, all of these

areas are of critical interest to Libya as well.

Expand Office of Security Cooperation

While the United States seeks to better involve its international partners and

allies in the process of building new Libyan security structures it needs to prod

USAFRICOM to improve its own capacity on the ground. The Office of Security

Cooperation within U.S. embassies play a vital role in learning the needs of a partner

country, transmitting those requirements to U.S. leadership, and then coordinating and

administering resources as the United States provides them. Given the magnitude of

tasks confronting USAFRICOM in Libya, it appears that the current level of OSC Tripoli

staffing (an officer and non-commissioned officer) is not sufficient. To correct this

deficiency, USAFRICOM should press to expand OSC manning as soon as practicable,

with due attention given to any logistical limitations within the embassy.

Improve Defense Advisory Capacities

Above the level of the Combatant Command, the Department of Defense should

explore better means to assist the formation of the new Libyan defense establishment.

Although it would face security challenges, a full-time security sector consultation team in Libya could provide Libyan officials with guidance they need at both a senior leader and working level. The Secretary of Defense's Ministry of Defense Advisory (MoDA) program is one such approach through which this goal could be accomplished, perhaps through the employment of contract advisors.[26]

To best assist the Libyans, this MoDA capacity needs to develop along two lines, both working and senior level. After decades of dictatorship, Libyan society and the military in particular have become extremely organized from the top down. Under Qadhafi, individual initiative was not typically rewarded, rather it was punished. As a result, subordinate officers rarely exercise authority, instead deferring to superiors for instruction and / or clearance to conduct any particular activity. Although a mid-level MoDA approach is needed for the implementation of bureaucratic reform, the United States cannot expect this alone to drive the process. Rank matters to Libyans, a senior Libyan general could never allow himself to risk "losing face" by taking advice from a Lieutenant Colonel. Therefore, the Libyan Minister of Defense and Chief of Staff vitally need a senior mentor, such as a retired general officer, one who can take the time to develop a relationship of trust and to advise discretely on how to restructure Libya's security apparatus. This is paramount, in order that the Libyan leader can preserve face and appear to "own" the initiatives emanating from his office.

Build a Core Libyan Security Force

The aforementioned recommendations primarily address measures that will assure the long term viability and professionalization of Libya's defense forces. In the short-to-medium term, the United States must find the political will to provide the Libyan

government with the means, including intelligence sharing and lethal assistance, to counter the growing threat posed by Islamic extremists and rogue militias. To this end, DoD should broaden its engagement using security assistance trainers, such as U.S. Special Forces teams, with the immediate goal of developing a battalion-sized Libyan combat force, coupled with a corresponding intelligence, transport, and logistic capability that would allow it to operate anywhere in Libya. This would quickly give the Libyan government a tool to deal with internal threats such as terrorist training camps and compounds belonging to hostile militias. Further, this unit could become a core capability around which a larger military force could develop; such a battalion would be capable of attracting recruits away from militias and dealing with larger security threats across the desert country.

Conclusion

The Arab Awakening upended America's Faustian bargain in North Africa. For decades the United States supported Middle Eastern dictators, ensuring stability at the expense of supporting democratic principles. The fall of several of those dictators left it without partners to ensure stability, and confrontational populations who felt America's legacy of hypocrisy made it an unreliable partner. President Obama's comment that the United States would no longer consider the Egyptian government an ally, "but we don't consider them an enemy" revealed that the United States had entered a period of strategic uncertainty.[27]

But in all of the Arab Middle East, Libya represents an exception. Instead of closing doors and limiting U.S. influence, the fall of the Qadhafi regime opened up

21

access to a people eager for closer ties with the United States. The U.S. détente with Qadhafi had been brief and lukewarm; it therefore, had not cut too deeply into the reserve of positive feelings earned among the Libyan general populace through years of mutual opposition to the regime. The end of the U.S. occupation of Iraq also removed a source of Libyan popular discomfort, leaving just an uneasiness regarding U.S. support for Israel. The U.S. armed aerial intervention of 2011 cemented American bona fides as a supporter of Libyan common interests. Alone among the newly democratized Arab states, Libya presents an immediate opportunity.

The chaos left in Qadhafi's absence presents security challenges unlike any other newly democratic Middle Eastern state, challenges which a fractured Libya cannot overcome alone. Having contributed to the dissolution of the Qadhafi regime, the United States arguably holds some moral responsibility to contribute to the success of the new Libyan government. With such in mind, this paper has presented several principles and concrete means through which the United States can assist Libya in the right direction.

It should be noted, none of these recommendations, even if implemented, will result in a quick improvement for Libya's security woes. Success will be achieved over years, if not at least a decade before the country has adequately functioning security forces. But, as recent events have demonstrated, without more robust and coordinated international assistance, Libya will remain unstable and terrorists will exploit its ungoverned spaces. The United States has the means, at a reasonably low cost, to help Libyans stabilize their country and put it on the path to long term viability. But to achieve that end, the United States must be willing to step back into an assertive role as a strategic leader before the opportunity is lost.

Endnotes

[1] Barak Barfi, "Libya's Unwilling Revolutionaries," http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/opinion/barak-barfi-libyas-unwilling-revolutionaries_7869 (accessed February 7, 2013)

[2] U.S. State Department, "Addressing the Challenge of MANPADS Proliferation," 2 February 2012, http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rm/183097.htm (accessed 15 March 2013).

[3] BBC News, "Libya's Muammar Gaddafi had chemical weapon cache," 20 January 2012

[4] Time, "Libya's New Crisis: A Wave of Assassinations Targeting Its Top Cops," 26 November 2012; New York Times, "Militants' Goal in Algeria Gas Plant Siege: Giant Fireball," 2 February 2013.

[5] Gallup, "Opinion Briefing: Libyans Eye New Relations With the West," August 13, 2012; Libyan openness is attributable not just to Libyan citizens' gratitude towards NATO for assistance in liberating their country, but also to a general friendliness towards the U.S. that predated the Revolution. This goodwill is based on the United States longstanding opposition to the unpopular Qadhafi regime, as well as recognition by older members of Tripolitianian society of the positive economic and social contributions provided by the U.S. operation of Wheelus Air Base during its 27 year presence. In addition to military partnership, employment for local civilians and other economic benefits, for many years the base provided the only TV broadcasts in Tripoli. Although it broadcasted primarily American programming, this became a platform for Libyans to learn a second language. The base also dedicated a portion of its programming each day to carry local news and public service announcements in Arabic.

[6] New York Times, "Election Results in Libya Break an Islamist Wave," 8 July 2012.

[7] Associated Press, "Libya's Militarized Youth Feed Into Economic Woes," 13 March 2013.

[8] Brian McQuinn, *After the Fall, Libya's Evolving Armed Groups,* Small Arms Survey, 2012.

[9] In 2012, this led to situations such as rescues at sea performed by private companies' supply vessels.

[10] The issue of equipment is an important one to the new Libyan military. Under the Qadhafi regime, what few armaments entered the country exclusively went to the regime protection forces, leaving the line units with mostly obsolete material. Like the militias around them, Libyan military units have had to convert civilian vehicles into technicals. Many Libyan military leaders the author spoke with stated the importance of acquiring modern military equipment. Not only would this set the Army apart from the militias, but it would increase its legitimacy in the eyes of Libyan citizens, and the Army's militia competitors. Just as important, it would prevent the illegal appropriation military vehicles. As a Libyan general described, if a thief repaints a Libyan army Toyota 4x4, it becomes untraceable – not so with a HMMWV, everyone would know that it was a (stolen) government vehicle.

[11] Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Volume 2, Foreign Operations*, FY2011, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/137936.pdf, (accessed 18 March 2013).

[12] The Telegraph, "Khamis Gaddafi toured US military facilities weeks before Libya crisis," 26 March 2011.

[13] Author's email correspondence with U.S. Embassy, Tripoli, Office of Security Cooperation, December 6, 2012.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Department of State, Congressional Budget Justification, Volume 2, Foreign Operations, FY2013, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185014.pdf (accessed 19 March 2013).

[16] U.S. Department of State, Fact Sheet, "U.S. Government Assistance to Libya," August 14, 2012, http://www.state.gov/s/d/met/releases/factsheets/2012/196949.htm (accessed February 7, 2013)

[17] Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), *Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Estimates*, http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2011/budget_justification/pdfs/01_Operation_and_Maintenance/O_M_VOL_1_PARTS/DSCA_FY11.pdf (accessed 18 March 2013).

[18] Department of Defense Inspector General, *Defense Institution Reform Initiative Program Elements Need to be Defined,* November 9, 2012, http://www.dodig.mil/PUBS/documents/DODIG-2013-019.pdf (accessed 7 February 2013).

[19] Notably, the United Kingdom Ministry of Defense has provided the most comprehensive level of support to the Libyan Ministry of Defense, in the form of a ten man Defense Advisory team. Members of this team are imbedded within departments of the Libyan military, including the Navy and Air Force. Additionally there is a civilian advisor in the Ministry of Defense. This team has played an important advisory role, including co-authoring a defense white paper intended to shape future Libyan military strategy and organization.

Source, UK Department of International Development, Security Sector Capacity-Building in Libya, 12 November 2012, http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2012-1728/LettertoLordChidgeyfromLordAhmad.pdf (accessed 18 March 2013).

[20] One just needs look next door at the U.S. strategic position in Egypt for an example of an engagement strategy unbalanced in favor of the military.

[21] Author interview with NATO official, 29 January 2013.

[22] NATO, Chicago Summit Declaration, 20 May 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87593.htm?mode=pressrelease (accessed February 7, 2013)

[23] Author interview with NATO official, 29 January 2013.

[24] NATO, "NATO/PFP Trust Fund Policy," http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-D60908A1-D596B167/natolive/official_texts_57702.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed 12 March 2013).

[25] NATO, "NATO's Relations with Iraq," http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-ABE23AFC-4A8C35F1/natolive/topics_88247.htm (accessed 12 March 2013).

[26] U.S. Department of Defense, *Ministry of Defense Advisors Program,* http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0211_moda/ (accessed 7 February 2013).

[27] ABC News, "Obama Says Egypt Neither Ally Nor Enemy," 12 September 2012.